



PUNCH

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Charivaria

It is estimated that HITLER has seen *The Merry Widow* at least three hundred and fifty times. But so far he hasn't visited the Mikado.

Spanish volunteers in Russia have asked the Reich to send them home. It is understood that they are willing to return to Russia next summer should Germany contemplate another spring offensive.

Inadequate supplies of food are being sent from Germany to Italy where dissatisfaction is growing. What troubles the Italians is, of course, that supplies can come along only at dictation speed.

A reporter who saw women of forty registering for National Service says they didn't look forty. Of course not. It's women of the 1882 class who look forty.

Flying Start

"NEW ZEALAND VETERAN OF 112
BORN IN DONEGAL."
Dublin Paper.

Describing "hooch," on sale at some London night resorts, a writer says that when mixed with soda water it foams up like old beer—if anybody can remember how old beer used to foam up.

Friendliness on the Farm

"25 Bullocks and Heifers,
2-year-olds; good sorts."
Advt. in Local Paper.

Foxes have been seen in the streets of a Surrey town. They were believed to be a reconnaissance patrol to find out if the scarcity of meets is because the local hunt is being mechanized.



The House of Commons, a Gallery writer says, is much quieter than it used to be. The dropping of the Fuel Rationing scheme was practically noiseless.

"My wife refuses to do business with door-to-door hawkers," says a correspondent. She is very wise not to part with her vacuum-cleaner.

Burglars who broke into a South London house had a meal of bacon and eggs which they had brought with them. Wakened by the fragrant aroma, the householder decided he was dreaming.

A military writer points out that there are very few Italians with the German Army on the Eastern Front. So it can't be that.

A correspondent says her butcher's boy has been called up and his younger brother now delivers the fish and vegetables in his place.

There is an interesting report that at a recent conference at German Headquarters on the Eastern Front the lights suddenly failed. At first it was thought that the FUEHRER had fused.



HITLER is said to be feeling so weak these days that he finds great difficulty in reciting his own speech.

An American soldier was seen doing a cross-word at a cricket match at Lords. Apparently the other puzzle had baffled him.

Counters in many New York shops are made of glass. The idea wouldn't be practicable for war-time shopping in this country.

When Two Strong Men . . .

("Hitler, accompanied by Ribbentrop, Nazi Foreign Minister, yesterday received Subhas Chandra Bose, the Indian Quisling, at the Führer's headquarters for a lengthy conference . . ."—Daily Telegraph.)

AND what a conference! If a full and authentic account had not reached this paper from a nearly unimpeachable neutral source we should have found the details almost impossible to credit.

It was a fine summer evening (says our Ankara correspondent) about half-way behind the back of the Ukrainian front. In a hastily-tidied portion of a devastated field an enormous dak bungalow had been erected by a slave gang of Roumanian peasants. A posse of storm-troops stood on guard. Birds detailed for the purpose were singing. Selected flowers were in bloom. Not since his important interview with the European representative of a disaffected element amongst the Dyak head-hunters had so much trouble been taken to present the Third Reich in a favourable aspect to any important foreign potentate.

The uniform devised for the occasion and adopted alike by Herr Hitler, von Ribbentrop, General Yodel, Field-Marshal Jaeger, and last but not least by Reichsmarschall Goering was simple in the extreme. They wore nothing but linen loin-cloths embroidered with swastikas. Their medals were suspended by plain black ribbons from their necks. In the case of Reichsluftfahrtminister Goering the effect was unusually impressive.

All looked a little uneasy as the fine June evening wore on. "He cometh not," said General Yodel.

"The confounded fool is late," muttered the Reichskanzler, tapping the floor impatiently with one foot.

"Time means little," answered von Ribbentrop, who had been reading one or two books on the subject, "to the denizens of the mysterious and inscrutable East."

There was a slight susurrus in the air.

Suddenly at the open window appeared the long-expected visitor, and as suddenly sailed into the room. He was seated on a flying carpet, and (to the chagrin of his hosts) wore a jewelled turban and long flowing robes. He descended gracefully to the ground and stepped off his Persian rug.

How wistful, how hungry was the gaze that the Leader cast upon that succulent and brightly-coloured vehicle which had conveyed the stranger into their midst! How long ago had not all the best and most nutritive carpets in Germany been taken to the Leningrad fighting-line to clothe the warriors of the Reich!

Subhas Chandra Bose salaamed.

The Germans gave the Nazi salute.

Subhas Chandra Bose gave the Nazi salute.

The Germans salaamed.

"Tell him to sit down," said the Fuehrer, turning to his interpreter, probably the only man in Europe equally familiar with the worst dialects of Austria and the languages of the inscrutable East.

For the purposes of the *divan* special couches had been prepared at the instigation of the German Foreign Office. They were intended to make their honoured guest feel entirely at home, and illustrated the ready tact which always informs the Teutonic mind. They consisted of flat pieces of board about the size of a bed-mattress, with long sharp nails driven into them. The points of the nails were uppermost. On one of these couches the Indian sank gracefully and with perfect ease. Less gracefully and with more imperfect ease sank down his hosts.

There were a few moments of rather poignant silence.

"Ask him," said the Fuehrer when the first pangs had abated, "if he would like a nut."

A simple repast was served by retired veterans of the Afrika Korps. "Say to him," continued the Fuehrer when the dishes had been taken away, "that we're getting worried about India and all that sort of thing, and we don't see why the Japanese should get all the fat out of this confounded war."

"The Chancellor of the Third Reich," said the interpreter, taking a deep breath, "is at one with the peoples of India in his desire to free the world from the tyranny of plutocracy and Jew-sponsored imperialism, whether it comes from the East or from the West. It is his fervent hope to be able to present India to the Indians and enrol Asia in the same New Order of prosperity and self-government as Europe enjoys to-day under his auspices. He counsels the people of India therefore to think twice before they entrust their destinies to any other Power than his, and suggests that there will be a pretty good rake-off for you and any other member of your party if you help to bring about this agreeable state of affairs. In other words, much as he hates the Allies he does not mean to see the armies of his well-beloved friend Hirohito, Son of Heaven, getting all the oil."

The Indian deputy, not unconscious of the fact that the interpreter's speech was of greater length than the Leader's, and in many ways rather a free rendering than a literal translation, smiled a mysterious Oriental smile.

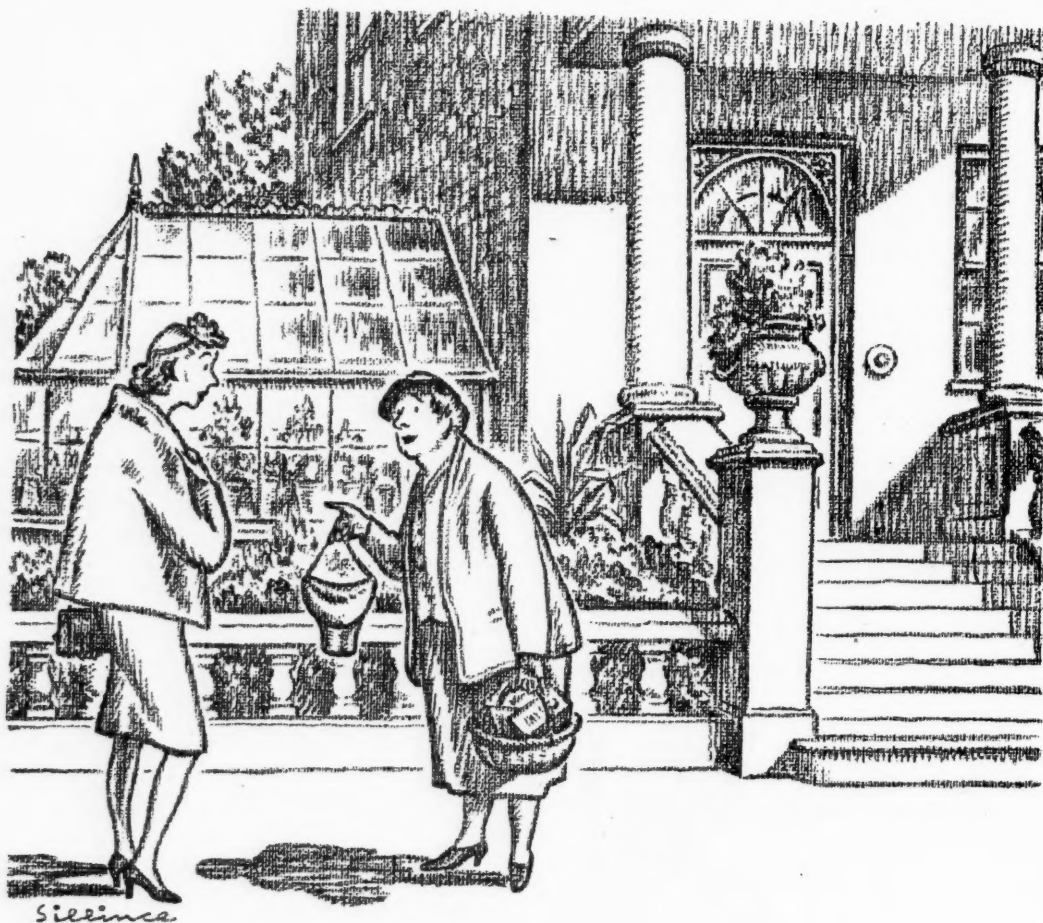
He then broke into a long historical, political and metaphysical harangue lasting for about three-quarters of



"Stay out there all night if you like, but take your elbow off No. 3 bell-push!"



OMENS IN AFRICA



"Well, dear, I think it MOST unwise not to carry a respirator when at any moment we're liable to be surprised by one of those gas exercises!"

an hour and giving a rough outline of the troubles of India since the dawn of time, not omitting reference to Alexander of Macedon and the Mogul Emperors. He pointed out the difficulties presented by culture, creed, caste, climate and military dispositions, in securing the immediate attainment of the ideal of liberty which all Indians no less than all Germans cherished, and finally inquired rather pertinently exactly how much in cash it would mean to him.

"What does it all boil down to, Ribbentrop?" asked the Leader, wincing a little as he shifted his position for the hundredth time, while a faint cry of anguish broke from the lips of Goering, who was suffering more deeply from infiltration than any of the others.

"I think——" began the Foreign Minister and stopped suddenly.

For the visitor had produced from under his robe a small pot containing earth which he placed on the floor in front of him. He covered it for a few moments with a larger earthenware lid. He removed the lid and a small spike of green was observed to be sprouting from the soil. Yet again he covered it, and again lifted the lid.

Before the astonished gaze of the Germans a mango

tree in full fruit had sprung into being. "Thus shall grow," observed the Oriental with exquisite politeness, "the love between the people of India and the people of Germany."

The interpreter translated, and Mr. Bose handed round the fruit.

"Wonderful!" cried Yodel.

"Not in any way believed to be!" echoed Jaegar.

"Vaster than Empires and more quick," said Preussische Minister Präsident Goering, showing an unexpected knowledge of the poems of Andrew Marvell.

The Fuehrer burst into tears.

"Tell him, Ribbentrop," he screamed—but it was too late.

Extricating a coil of rope from some other part of his costume, Subhas Chandra Bose flung it into the air, climbed up it and disappeared into the night.

"Well, what do you know about that!" said von Ribbentrop.

But the Leader did not listen to him. Throwing himself down on the Persian carpet (which still remained), he was chewing the finest part of the pattern with a look of ecstasy in his eyes.

EVOE.

Medicine Without Tears

"LET me see—what did the Sister say your name was?"
"I'm sure I don't know, doctor. I never saw no sister."

"No, but what is your name?"

"Beg pardon?"

"What is your name?"

"What is my name?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"Smith. Mrs. Smith."

"Good. Now what is the matter with you, Mrs. Smith?"

"Beg pardon?"

"What is the matter with you?"

"What is the matter with me?"

"Yes."

"That's what I want you to tell me, doctor."

"Well, I mean, what are you complaining of?"

"Beg pardon?"

"What are you complaining of?"

"What am I complaining of?"

"Yes."

"I'm not making any complaint about anything, doctor."

"No, I mean, have you got a pain or anything?"

"Beg pardon?"

"Have you got a pain?"

"Have I got a pain?"

"Yes."

"I've been bad a long time."

"How long?"

"How long?"

"Yes."

"Oh, a goodish while, my own doctor thinks."

"And what exactly has been the trouble?"

"Beg pardon?"

"What has been the trouble with you?"

"What's been the trouble with me?"

"Yes."

"I hope I'm no trouble to anyone, doctor."

"Well, let's go back to the pain your doctor says you have."

"Beg pardon?"

"What is this pain you have?"

"What's the pain I have?"

"Yes."

"It's not really so much of a pain as a gnaw."

"Where is it?"

"Beg pardon?"

"Where is this gnaw?"

"Where is the gnaw?"

"Yes. That's it."

"Shall I show you, doctor?"

"I'd rather you just told me for the moment. I'll look at you later."

"Beg pardon?"

"I say I'll have a look at you later."

Where is the pai—I mean the gnaw?"

"Hasn't my doctor said in the letter?"

"Yes, but I'd rather you told me about it."

"You'd rather I told you about it?"

"Yes, please."

"It'll take a long time . . ."

Misrepresentation

I AM in complete sympathy with those members of the Cabinet who have complained recently of the misrepresentation of their speeches in the popular Press. I too have suffered in this way. As district secretary of the National Association of French Masters it was my duty to speak at the annual conference—held a few weeks ago. My subject was "Some Current Educational Issues." Nothing, I think, pleases pedagogues so much as a serious subject treated in humorous vein. Accordingly I wound up my discourse with the following words: "... and as for the question of the school-leaving age, I say, gentlemen, why sixteen? Why not eighteen, twenty or even twenty-five? I can assure you, gentlemen, that I should not be *entirely* comfortable about the irregular verbs even if my students remained with me until they were thirty." There was much laughter and I was well pleased. The next day the *Megthorpe Sentinel* published a report of the conference. I read with amazement: "Mr. J. Sopwhittle, M.A., of St. Morbid's, delivered a forthright speech in which he demanded the raising of the school-leaving age to twenty-five if not thirty." I wrote a very stinging letter to the editor requesting an immediate apology and a public refutation of the report. In the *Sentinel* of Tuesday a short note headed "Erratum" appeared at the foot of an advertisement column. It said: "In the report of Mr. J. Sopwhittle's speech (Saturday edition, page 2), read '15 or 16' for '25 if not 30.'" I was not entirely satisfied.

In the staff-room I sensed an atmosphere of hostility. Charteris suggested that I was angling for the job of President of the Board of Education. Biggot implied that my alleged suggestions would increase rather than diminish my problems of discipline. Evans asked whether I proposed to allow my students to marry, and if so—did I favour family allowances? Only Pringle-Watt,

however, was really spiteful. He asked whether my views were dictated by my experience of teaching in what he rudely called "the indirect method." He asked how I intended to keep abreast of my aging students. Did I propose to take a correspondence course in French? Finally, he stated that my outburst was irresponsible; that it brought discredit on St. Morbid's and on him (Pringle-Watt) in particular, and that he intended to denounce my utterances at the next monthly meeting of the Megthorpe Dinner-Wagon Club.

Although I was deeply hurt by these characteristic sallies I was in no mood to retaliate, for I was meeting with even more objectionable criticism from the boys. A round robin with 275 signatures was sent to me. It said: "Masters who are trying to keep us out of the R.A.F. until the next war are not wanted at St. Morbid's." On top of this a wave of indiscipline sprang up. When I asked 2A what page we had reached in "Colomba" the whole class answered in unison "Twenty-five, if not thirty, sir." These numbers were chalked up on every blackboard, underlined in every text-book and repeated aloud for my benefit wherever I walked. When young Tipper came to my room after school to ask me for the meaning of "vingt-cinq, sinon trente," I could stand it no longer.

I asked the Head's advice, and the next morning after prayers he threatened to gate the whole school if there was any further mention of what he called "Mr. Sopwhittle's indiscretion."

I spent a very miserable week-end, but I brightened considerably when I read an account of Pringle-Watt's speech to the Dinner-Wagon Club. Large black headlines announced: "Local Schoolmaster Demands Raising of the School-leaving Age to Forty." Then followed this paragraph: "In a moving address on educational reforms Mr. Pringle-Watt, B.Sc."—(P.-W. is M.Sc.)—"spoke of irresponsible voices pleading for an extension of school-days to twenty-five or thirty years. 'What moderation, gentlemen, what half-measures are these? Are we to force our boys out upon a cruel world,' said Mr. Watt"—(P.-W. is proud of the "Pringle")—"at the tender age of twenty-five or thirty?" (Laughter.) 'Are we to deny them those fruits of learning which only the formative years of thirty to forty can give them?' (Proceeding.) A full account of this and other speeches will be published in to-morrow's issue."

Pringle-Watt had a bad cold during the following week and was absent from duty.

At the Pictures

PURSUIT STORIES

PACKED with incident, almost at the breaking-point once or twice with suspense, ALFRED HITCHCOCK's *Saboteur* is one of the most effective things he ever did; I don't know about its being one of the best, in an absolute sense, but this too is tempting to say. The piece is a sort of collection of the most successful effects from his earlier pictures, as Miss DILYS POWELL has observed: she enumerated five, two of which I had noticed, but omitted the chase through the waterfall (*The Thirty-Nine Steps*), the telescope view (*The Secret Agent*), and the oldest of the lot, the climax at the top of a sightseers' rendezvous. In *Blackmail* (1929) this last was the British Museum; in *Saboteur*, now that Mr. HITCHCOCK is in the U.S., it is the Statue of Liberty. Now that Mr. HITCHCOCK is in the U.S. . . . that is probably the key to the whole thing. He has very nearly everything to play with now; in a picaresque pursuit-story he can get very nearly everything in. Here there is less ingenious trickery with ordinary objects and surroundings, more straightforward display of the (to us) unusual, but equally absorbing entertainment. I enjoyed *Saboteur* exceedingly; I left cheerful and stimulated. I like to suppose, as we all do, that this effect is produced on me only by the genuinely meritorious.

GRAHAM GREENE's story *A Gun for Sale* was one described by him as "An Entertainment" rather than "A Novel"—a device he employs, I conclude, to indicate that the "ending" is "happy" (as it concerns the sympathetic characters) rather than severely logical or dramatically right; or perhaps rather that the characters for whom all ends happily have been made sympathetic to the reader, and the others not. Even so it was evidently not quite entertaining enough for Hollywood, which has made all kinds of alterations in the story for *This Gun for Hire* (Director: FRANK TUTTLE). Whether because of this or

not I don't know, but the film turns out to be much less good than I had expected: rather scrappy, in spots vaguely second-rate. The efforts made to retain some of the psychology do not

offer itself—the two cabaret songs pleasantly sung by the heroine (VERONICA LAKE), for instance. A pursuit-story done with reasonable competence can hardly fail to entertain; but *This Gun for Hire*, though it is interesting in several ways, has several scenes directed with imagination, and gives a big chance, well taken, to an unfamiliar player (ALAN LADD), is a disappointment. Perhaps it was unlucky in turning up at the same time as *Saboteur*.

I'm ashamed to say that I had never seen the eight-years-old Soviet film *Chapayev* before the present revival at the Tatler. It is remarkable how these classic Russian pictures give one the impression of getting into the open air, how they introduce the almost forgotten stimulus of sunlit reality into an industry based on the unreal seen by artificial light. A warning is as usual necessary to the unthinking filmgoer, that he must not expect a scratched copy of a film made in Russia in 1934 to unroll as smoothly or to look as glossy as what Hollywood cooked up for him a few months ago; but for people willing to overlook small surface blemishes—and once the story has begun and the characters have been established this is easy enough—*Chapayev* is full of rewards. It is essentially the story of the military education of a peasant general, of the relation between *Chapayev*—illiterate and a bit swollen-headed with success, but a born leader—and the subtle, experienced political commissar sent to advise him. Besides being "about something," the film is rich and various entertainment, full of character and action.

In *They Flew Alone* (Director: HERBERT WILCOX) the drama is spread very thin and considerably more than twice. There is really not much for a film audience in the breaking of a long-distance flying record: the stern-faced pilot in the cockpit, the needle of the petrol-gauge, the clouds from above, an outside shot of the plane, people waiting for news, montage of newspaper-posters, cheering crowds . . . and all this several times over. I'm afraid it simply won't do. R.M.

[*Saboteur*

THAT FIFTH COLUMNIST'S LOOK
Fry NORMAN LLOYD

square with the determination to make any kind of effect that happens to



J.H. BOWD

[*This Gun for Hire*

NOBLER MOMENTS OF A KILLER
Rayburn ALAN LADD

Return

SECOND-Lieutenant Sympton and I passed through London on our way home on leave, after successfully passing out from our O.C.T.U., and Sympton said that he was overcome with a desire to visit his old haunts. At one period of his chequered career he was a scoutmaster in East London. For the sake of that excellent movement he keeps the fact as dark as possible, but I was in the secret, having once lent him my car to take some latrine-screens down to camp.

"They say," said Sympton, "that East London has had a bomb or so since I was there before the war. No doubt the whole thing was much exaggerated, like everything else, but we have a couple of hours to wait for our train, so we might as well go and have a look."

We took the Underground to White-chapel, and walked along the Mile End Road. A few soldiers saluted us rather indignantly, apparently feeling that officers were rather superfluous in the Mile End Road, but on the whole our new uniforms attracted very little attention. Sympton was disappointed, so he took me into a café where he used to be known in his scoutmastering days, saying that we could at least surprise Alf, the proprietor.

"How are you, Alf?" he said.

"You've got the button of one of your pockets undone," said Alf—"tea or coffee?"

"Tea," said Sympton weakly.

"Tea is off," said Alf, "so's coffee. You'll 'ave to be satersfied wiv cocer. There's a war on, you know."

We drank our cocer and retired, feeling that the conquering hero business had fallen rather flat.

"Perhaps," said Sympton, "people who stood up to a three-months' uninterrupted blitz aren't easily impressed by subalterns just off an O.C.T.U. But still, I'd like to surprise somebody. We'll walk down Potter's Gardens and call on Jim Benson. I used to throw him out of my scout troop about every other week, and many's the time I have walked down Potter's Gardens and had him knock my scoutmaster's hat off with a well-directed potato. He'll be impressed by my pip, if nobody else in East London is."

We passed from the Mile End Road into an area of desolation that can hardly have its match in all England. Long black streets, once seething with close-packed human life, were now nearly deserted, almost every window a vacant eye through which a glimpse of charred wallpaper made a framework for the sky. Little attempt at

clearance had been made, except in the roadway, and pitiful family possessions still lay forlornly in the broken rooms. Perhaps one house in ten was tenanted, but these, with their demure blinds and their carefully-whitened steps, only emphasized the tragedy that had come to their neighbours.

Potter's Gardens, when we came to it, seemed to have suffered less severely. Quite half the houses were habitable and therefore tenanted.

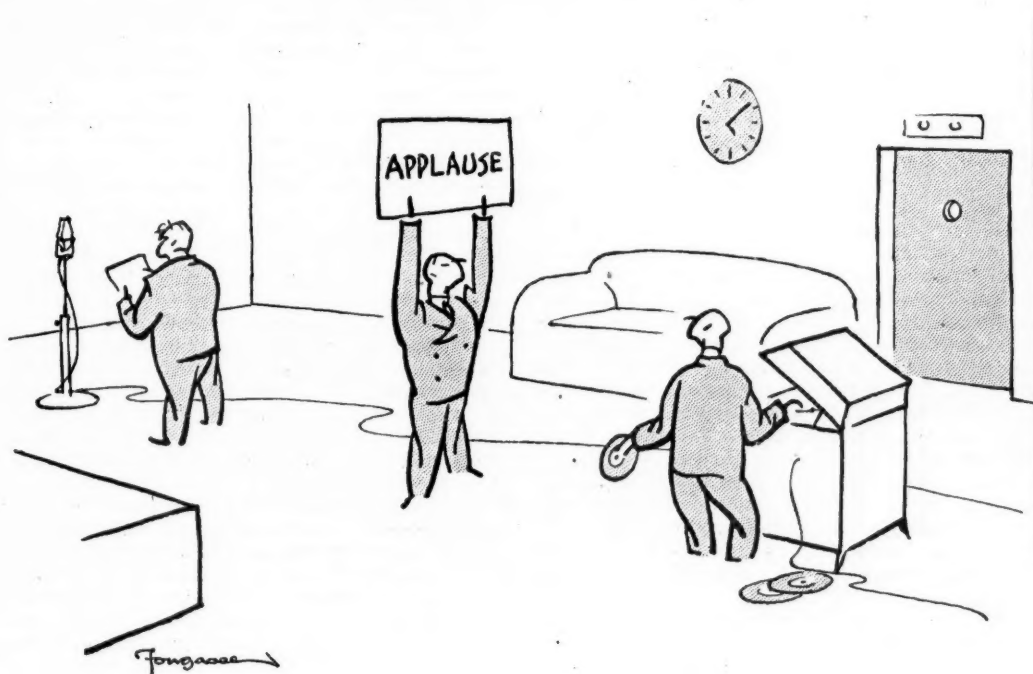
We knocked on Jim Benson's door, and his mother asked us in. She showed us a picture of him in R.A.F. uniform.

"He was killed over Germany," she said, "coming back from bombing Berlin."

We made a hasty exit, neither of us being much good on such occasions.

"They weren't a bad lot, those boys of mine," said Sympton as we walked back up Potter's Gardens. "There will never be boys like Jim and his pals again. . . ."

But I think Sympton was wrong, for at that moment two well-directed rotten apples struck our two neat subaltern's hats, and they fell to the shrapnel-pitted pavement, as the authors of the outrage scampered to safety through a gaping hole in the wall of a blitzed house.





"I've no idea what makes me ask, but why do you want soap?"

Mess Interlude

THE Adjutant has decorated the Mess with a lot of pictures that he brought back from a dugout at St. Eloi. Lieutenant Wiggle says that it is an eye-opener on the way the last war was carried on. Lieutenant Tinkle says that he would have thought that the Adjutant, even as a young centurion, would have gone in for a steadier type.

Second-Lieutenant Whoopit, of the Alliance Knitting and Forwarding Co.'s Works Unit, says that his men are getting troublesome about discipline. They are insisting on their right to do ceremonial drill in their spare time and have lately taken to bobbing out suddenly from behind corners and saluting him. It seems that his Platoon-Sergeant is very strict and is egging them on. Captain Gollop says that he should have a quiet word with the Platoon-Sergeant when they are both off duty and in plain clothes, but Second-Lieutenant Whoopit explains that this sergeant is his Managing Director and so it is worse when they are in plain clothes, because then they both stand to attention and call one another "Sir." The last time they had a drink together like that the barmaid sent for the manager to watch them in case they started anything.

Lieutenant Crasher, of the Commandos, says that he has asked the captain from the Regular Army who is to lecture us on street-fighting to-day to come early so that we can have a chat and ask questions before he starts. He is looking forward to this lecture as he thinks we may learn some tough stuff. The Home Guard has always been at a disadvantage in having to improvise its own tactics, and he fears that we may be looked on as rather pansy.

Lieutenant Wiggle says that he once saw a naval rating salute an officer. It was very old-world and touching and brought a lump to the throat.

Captain Hackett says that he has been on a short course at Zone on the correct attitude of the soldier towards the enemy. It seems that some soldiers have been found

disliking the enemy, and this amounts practically to bringing politics into it, so Zone are very anxious to stop it.

Captain Spigot, of the Westmorlands, has arrived and is being introduced to us by Lieutenant Crasher, who is explaining that we are rather rusty at street-fighting as there are so few houses left for us to knock about now that all the blitz damage has been cleared away, there being a rule against blowing up ones that people are living in. Captain Spigot says that the Regular Army is not allowed to blow up houses itself, but of course it knows the correct way, and he can check up with us in case we have any wrong ideas.

Lieutenant Crasher says that we feel it a great privilege to have Captain Spigot with us as he can put us right on so many little points. Take the other night: he dreamt he was turning out of Panton Street into Haymarket and he was engaged at point-blank range by a mortar from the direction of Coventry Street and by machine-gun fire from the Pall Mall side. He had got only a flame-thrower and a light machine-gun team on him, and he could not for the life of him make up his mind whether to engage the mortar with his machine-gun and the machine-guns with the flame-thrower, or vice versa. It made him feel such a fool. In the end, as he was going to Scott's anyway, he turned everything on the mortar and pretended not to notice the machine-guns, but he is not sure now whether he did right.

Captain Spigot says that it would probably depend on the direction of the wind, and perhaps he should have sent back for reinforcements; but Lieutenant Crasher explains that in this dream he was shaky about where to send for reinforcements. There were some elephants lounging about the stage-door of the Criterion, but he was not sure which side they were on.

Captain Hackett says that it has nothing to do with street-fighting, but if Captain Spigot has any pictures of the enemy that show him in the better light he will be obliged by the loan of them. He is afraid that some of our men may have slipped into the way of looking on the enemy as being rather awful, and Captain Spigot, as a Regular, will realize how bad this is for a battalion.

Lieutenant Crasher says that he wants Captain Spigot's opinion on a quick-knit street-corner strong-point he has designed, which any child could run up in a moment just out of bodies and a few paving-stones.

Second-Lieutenant Whoopit says that perhaps Captain Spigot can tell him whether a Regular officer would acknowledge a salute when not either in uniform or in civilian clothes—say, when he was having a shower-bath after parade.

Lieutenant Wiggle wants to know whether the Regular Army says "Open in the King's Name" first and then blows the house up, because he has a Platoon-Sergeant who always insists on it. This sergeant used to be in a lawyer's office and he says that it is in accordance with Magna Carta or something if it is a private house and in England.

Lieutenant Crasher says that what always puzzles him is, say you have got the ground floor and are tired of popping at them through the ceiling, is it better just to light up the laths under the ceiling or to go to all the trouble of setting fire to the stairs so as to fool them when they try to come down?

Captain Spigot says that he did not know that we had had some practice in street-fighting, and perhaps it will be better if he sees us doing a bit of street-fighting first and then gives us a lecture to show where we have got into bad ways. It seems that they are not allowed to do much street-fighting in his battalion, and it is some years since he was on a course. If we do not mind, he will bring some of his men down to watch.

Lieutenant Crasher says that in that case he can show Captain Spigot that street-corner strong-point here and now with the help of a few tables, if some of the officers do not mind being bodies. It will not mean bending them much.

A. M. C.

Planned Cycling

THE occupants of the little hotel in the mountains settled down after dinner to argue about their respective routes for the morrow. Maps were strewn on the floor, altimeters hung on the picture-rail to strengthen their morale, compasses shaken back to normal, and everyone was happy. I attached myself to a comparatively quiet group of three Scots and was soon addressing each of them as George.

The Georges had arranged to cycle next day to a point some twelve miles away whence the ascent of one of the finest peaks in Scotland was possible. I wanted to do the trip with them, but had lost my own bicycle that day; I therefore suggested that four people sharing three bicycles could do it almost as quickly as three. At first they seemed bitterly opposed to the whole idea, but in the end I wore down their resistance.

"Look," I said, to clinch the argument, "three men begin to cycle from here. A rides three-quarters of the distance and walks the rest; B rides half-way, walks to A's bicycle and then rides again; C rides the first quarter and walks to B's bicycle; and D walks to C's bicycle and rides to the finish. They all finish roughly together. What about it?"

There was really nothing to be said, but George A had one kick left. "Every stage," he said, "is walked by someone. Therefore the time taken must equal that taken by one man to walk the whole distance. I admit," he added, "that by a logical extension this seems to prove that bicycles are useless. Well, perhaps they are. You can have mine for a pound."

I at once handed over the pound in response to this quixotic offer, and generously announced that my bicycle was available for the next day's operations. So the matter was settled.

Next morning a friend of the Georges unexpectedly arrived on his bicycle, and after hearing an all-too-brief explanation of the plan asked to join in. It could clearly be modified to include him; I therefore found it impossible to refuse, although last-minute changes always bring trouble. We hurriedly reorganized the stages and set off.

The first mile included a long steep hill, and I offered to walk the first stage myself; the three Georges and the new arrival, Eric, disappeared on the bicycles. George A played his part competently. He rode four-fifths of the way to a fork in the road which we had arranged as the beginning of the last stage, left my bicycle there, took the upper road on foot, and has not been seen since—at least by me. George B cycled to his scheduled point, walked to the fork and then proceeded along the lower road for a mile or two; he was soon overtaken by George C, who made the same mistake. Eric and I should of course have been up with them by this time, but in fact we were far behind.

Eric fell behind the others almost at the start, and after walking a quarter of a mile or so up the hill decided that his cycling stage was finished. He therefore discarded his bicycle in my favour, and a few minutes later I passed it without dreaming that it had any connection with our party at all. He then walked to the top of the hill, where he found two bicycles. These puzzled him considerably.

The obvious conclusion, that they belonged to outsiders, apparently did not occur to him; instead he decided that a mistake had been made in front, and he conceived it to be his duty to correct it by taking both bicycles forward, riding one and pushing the other. In a few miles, however, he came across the genuine article left for him by George C; still maintaining his profound lack of confidence in the intelligence of his predecessors, he decided to take that along as well.

This difficult operation he accomplished by a shuttlecock system of riding two bicycles forward and one back again for short stretches, and at length he reached—by the lower road—the point where Georges B and C were anxiously awaiting reinforcements. They were surprised to see him arrive in the first place with two bicycles; their astonishment when, after a short disappearance on one, he again turned up with two, must have been profound. He added to it by his refusal to enter into long explanations. Announcing briefly that he had seen all the bicycles he wanted to for some time, he walked on in search of George A. Instead he found a railway station, which suited him just as well.

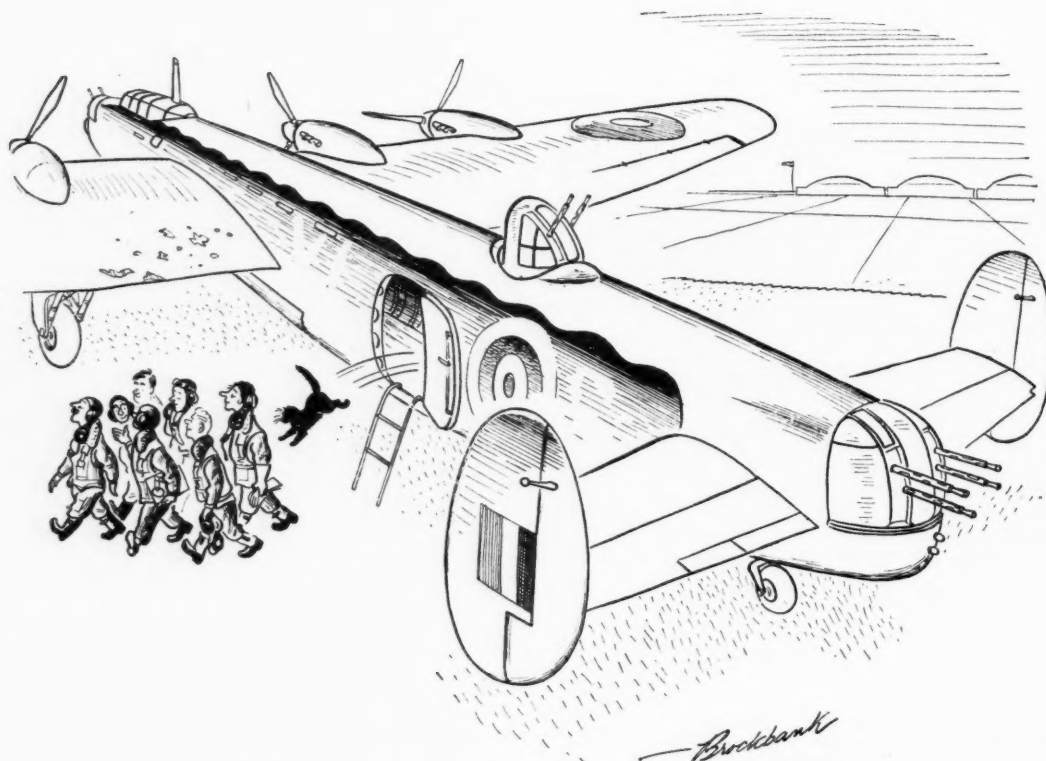
Georges B and C sat among the five bicycles and thought matters out. They knew one must belong to someone outside the party; the difficulty was to decide which. They managed to narrow the field down to the two strangers, but their final selections differed. At length George B settled the problem by mounting his bicycle and pushing his choice down the road in an attempt to find its owner; but a minute or two later George C, not to be outdone, mounted his bicycle and pushed his choice in a thrilling chase after George B.

I was privileged to see a little of this unique sporting event. After a gruelling walk, unrelieved by the use of any bicycles at all, I had arrived at a point some distance along the upper road. From this point of view I had an excellent view of the race, but I was too far away to be able to intervene.

I went down to the lower road to investigate and there I found my bicycle. The moment I mounted it the cross-bar broke; as I dropped off so did the pedals; in the ensuing mêlée the chain disintegrated and both tyres exploded. George B afterwards confessed that it had cost him some trouble even to push it along the lower road, and George A's subsequent disappearance was completely explained.

I left the thing there and walked back to the hotel. Unfortunately I had never heard of that railway station.





One Year Hence

(The German flag is now flying over the Athenian Acropolis.)

I HAILED a dream and to it said
 Carry me hence a little way;
 I mounted, and its wide wings spread
 And we went on past night and day
 And past four seasons, and ahead
 Of Time we came to that blue bay
 On which the Acropolis looks down
 Over the houses of the town
 Athens loved. A column grey
 Of smoke was rising from the crown
 Of those bare rocks, which more renown
 Have gathered than has touched the clay
 Of other hills, or ever may.
 What priest, I wondered, had returned
 With what old rite from the decay
 Of ages? And my dream I turned
 Up the grey slope to where there burned
 This lonely fire. And there there stood
 An old man who, as I discerned,
 Tended the fire in careless mood;
 And near him was a multitude
 With weary faces lit by smiles,
 And shadowed eyes that seemed to brood
 On griefs gone past; and all the miles
 Of hills were shining in the sun,

And waves and mountains and far isles.
 Who was the priest, I asked of one
 Beside me, tending the small flame?
 Priest, this man answered, he was none,
 But from the public gardens came,
 Under the hill, a man whose aim
 Was to have tidy lawns, and clear
 The paths of litter, and keep tame
 What the wild weeds would overrun.
 And then I asked what he did here.
 He but burns rubbish, I was told.
 But why the crowd that gathered near,
 As when men watched some rite of old?
 Over the pillars of pale gold,
 As in that southern sun appear
 The six and forty that uphold
 Age after age the Parthenon,
 A flagstaff stood, new, white and cold
 And empty: there flapped on and on
 Its cord against it uselessly
 With every wind that wandered by.
 The grey smoke floated to the sky,
 Right past the staff that had no flag,
 And seemed to smell of smouldering rag,
 Such as they burn when beggars die.

ANON.



THE FATE OF A BOAST

"I regret to have to make a slight modification of a previous announcement of mine. It appears that a bomb *has* fallen on Germany."

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, June 2nd.—House of Lords: The Shape of Things to Come?

House of Commons: The Tale of Another Glorious First of June.

Wednesday, June 3rd.—House of Commons: Ladies in the News.

Thursday, June 4th.—House of Commons: Fuel, Light and Power.

Tuesday, June 2nd.—To a cheering House of Commons to-day Mr. CHURCHILL told the story of another Glorious First of June. He entered with the jaunty step of a bearer of good tidings. He beamed on the Ministers near him and he read eagerly through the notes in his hand. Then he turned and waved (regardless of the rules) to Mrs. CHURCHILL, sitting in the Ladies' Gallery.

All these signs shrewd observers have learned to recognize as the prelude to good news, and they waited impatiently until a rather wearisome Question-time was ended.

Knowing how suspense whets the appetite, the PRIME MINISTER went with deliberation to the Table and began slowly. He thought the House would wish to have some news, said he, about the week's battle in Libya.

The House clearly did wish.

General ROMMEL, the German Commander, had said he had superior forces in action and intended to capture Tobruk.

With an impish grin, Mr. CHURCHILL—doubtless recalling his oath never again to prophesy—proceeded to quote verbatim a report from General AUCHINLECK, our intrepid commander on the spot. And a forthright soldierly report it was, vivid and graphic in its simplicity and freedom from purple patches and resounding phrases.

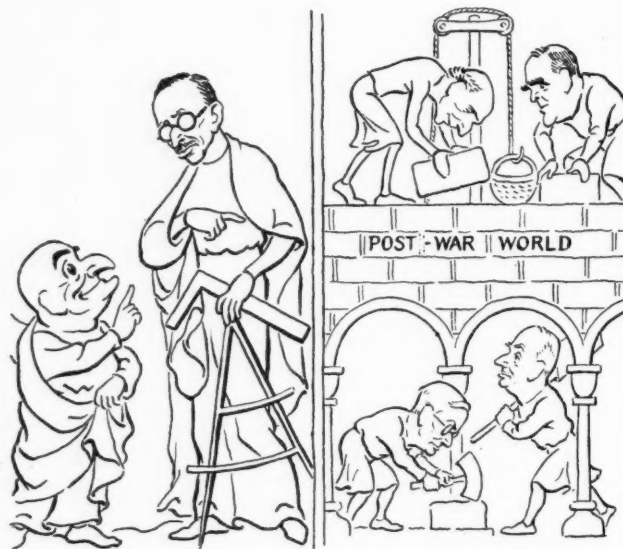
Mr. CHURCHILL (still playing for safety) frequently interjected "says General AUCHINLECK," when he came to the more optimistic parts of the statement.

But his general buoyancy left no doubt that Mr. CHURCHILL (but for

that oath of eternal abstinence) would have said so too.

"ROMMEL's plans have gone awry, whatever happens," was one phrase of the General's which got a big hand.

The fight was severe (said the General) and would go on. Losses, both in the air and on land, were not light—on either side. But on our side morale was high (said the General). The cheers rose again. Then Mr. CHURCHILL, unable any longer to endure this strange and unwonted rôle of a teller of someone else's tale, added the postscript which those who knew him had expected all the time.



RECONSTRUCTION BY THE LORDS

(After a thirteenth-century drawing)

LORD CRANBORNE, LORD CECIL OF CHELWOOD, LORD SANKEY, LORD ADDISON AND LORD PERTH

"We have every reason," he said—this time not quoting the General but that student of war, WINSTON CHURCHILL—"to be satisfied, and more than satisfied, with the course that the battle has taken. . . ."

The stern new-found caution reasserted itself suddenly and he added: "So far."

Thus ended Chapter One of the new story of the Glorious First of June. Chapter Two was no whit less glorious. It told of a "mammoth raid" with 1,036 warplanes over Essen on the night of the First. Essen, which for decades had made engines of death against us, now provided "numerous and widespread conflagrations" appropriate to Flaming June, and the result

of the raid had been of a "devastating character."

It followed one on Cologne a few nights earlier, when 1,130 British-manned aircraft had operated, setting the whole town ablaze and the whole German propaganda machine screaming "Vandal!" The raids would be followed by many more, for the PREMIER, his jaw set grimly, said this: "German cities, harbours and centres of war production will be subjected to an ordeal the like of which has never been experienced in any country in continuity, severity or magnitude."

He sat down. There was not a single "supplementary"—sure sign that the House was satisfied.

Then Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS promised a revised version of the much-criticized coal-rationing scheme, and the House went on to talk about the War Damage Bill in committee.

Given a rough House on the question of overcrowding in the cafeteria in which M.P.s and officials snatch their hasty meals, Mr. BRACEWELL SMITH, Chairman of the Kitchen Committee, retorted that any amount of staff would not get them served more quickly—"You cannot get a quart into a pint pot." Members briskly pointed out that their complaint was that not even the pint was gettable, but the "Minister of the Interior" merely shrugged.

A maiden speech by temporal Lord LANG (who made his maiden speech as an Archbishop some 34 years ago) enriched a House of Lords' debate on post-war planning. It was an eloquent plea for looking ahead, so that we were not caught unprepared when peace once more reared its welcome head. There must be no more burning of food to keep up prices, while thousands lived in want, there must be light and air and space for all to live in—homes fit, indeed, for heroes, but not *only* for heroes.

He added as a contribution to Mr. Punch's Anthology of Inappropriate Descriptions, a reference to the massive and gigantic Lord REITH as a "transient phantom of Government." But



"There's too much hate in this course, Sergeant. Tell them we're only invading Britain."

nobody seemed to mind, or even to smile, any more than they did at Lord CREWE's delightful reference to the activities of "seniors who *lingered on the stage*" but would not see "*the reaping of the harvest*."

Noble lords spoke wistfully or nostalgically of the kind of world they want to see after the war. But through it ran a healthy determination to do all that is possible to ensure that we, at any rate, are not to blame if things go wrong again.

Wednesday, June 3rd.—Miss IRENE WARD and Lady ASTOR were in the news to-day, each in her different way. Miss WARD (who gets incensed with some ease, and likes righteous indignation as a setting for her highly non-austere fashion displays) astonished the House with a burst of intellectual sub-machine-gun fire.

Some hapless Minister had given her an answer with which she was patently not amused. So she ups and says so. She quivered with rage. She glared (if that is what ladies do) at the Minister. She snapped (if a lady does) at the Minister. "If I were a man, and not an honourable Member . . ."—(her male colleagues did not seem to relish

this apparent distinction)—"If I were a man, and not an honourable Member, my language would be unrepeatable!"

She did not say "So there!" but she clearly meant it.

The House was shocked and shaken. Members said "Tut, tut!" and even "Dear me!" Mr. SHINWELL hopefully appealed for a "sample," but none was forthcoming.

Then Lady ASTOR, faced with a demand for consultation with "this House" before plans for the new Parliamentary buildings are passed, acidly observed that not many of the then sitting Members would be there to pass or reject such plans.

Mr. GEORGE GRIFFITHS, from the Socialist Benches, remarked in his powerful sotto voce that even her Ladyship would be getting on in years. Whereupon—such is the fickleness of human female—Lady ASTOR blew him as pretty a kiss as has crossed that austere floor this many a moon.

Quite romantic, it was.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

In the Lords, Lord WOOLTON, Food Minister, announced his assumption of the style and title of Lord High Milkman, in charge of the nation's entire milk supplies.

He also promised a scheme under which all retailers would *have* to buy from the nearest wholesaler—

Buy the thing that's nearest,

Though it's dull at times—

this being the surest way of helping the national lame dog over the stile of war-time difficulties.

Thursday, June 4th.—Major GWILYM LLOYD GEORGE was the star of to-day's Commons performance. There was a rousing cheer as he rose to make his bow as Minister of Fuel, Light and Power. But, alas! it was a false alarm. For M. of F., L. and P. though he be, he answered for his old Department, the Ministry of Food—and called it "my Department" into the bargain.

However, the House always likes to cheer its most popular Member. Anyway, he probably "has it to come" when the Government's plans for the future of the coal industry are debated soon. So (as with coal) a little extra goodwill stored up is a wise precaution against possible rationing later.

On Lifts

I DON'T mean the lifts you used to give soldiers in the days of petrol, but the lifts the Americans call elevators—though I suppose they are really only elevators when they go up. I don't know what they are called when they go down, and they must go down or they couldn't go up, if you take my meaning. And I don't really mean the lifts at Tube stations, where you always stand clear of the wrong gates; or even those nice lifts at the stores, all full of vicars' wives in tweeds, wanting the Turnery—first floor and across the bridge. What I am trying to write about are the lifts in Government offices.

These can be divided into two classes, the Office of Works and the non-Office of Works.

The chief difficulty about the Office of Works type is to find them. Nowadays this is not such a problem as it used to be, for when you go into one of the older Government offices a messenger comes along with you, and he may quite likely have been in the office a day or two, and may quite likely have a rough idea where the lift is. But in peace-time the man at the door would just say, "Take the lift," and go on drinking cocoa. Then you would walk about a bit, and after reading the names of all sorts of rather frightening bureaucrats on a large number of dark-grey doors, you would see a door without any name on it and a bell-push beside it. You would press this, and nothing would happen. At last, when you had just given it up, there would be a sort of wheezing sound behind the door and a light would be seen moving behind the chinks. Then again nothing would happen, until quite suddenly the door would be flung at you from inside, and there would be the lift. Entering, you would find an aged man who, heaving painfully at a rope, would propel you, slow, how slowly, towards the upper regions.

But now that so many Government departments have gone into luxury flats for the duration, you are liable to happen upon a very different kind of lift. This, the non-Office of Works type, is operated by a poltergeist. There is no trouble about finding this lift. It likes to be visited. A notice tells you where it is. When you press the button an illuminated legend appears, with the words LIFT COMING. When it arrives it disgorges three or four charming young ladies in a state of suppressed mirth. You gather from their conversation that they had not



"Tell me, doctor, what do YOU think of our dear Fuehrer's intuition?"

"Hush, nurse, he's had it removed."

Incitement to Mutiny

WHITE walls, red roofs, a dusty street
Where few but friendly people meet
And sunshine in a draught divine
Is bottled and comes out as wine—
The bells are calling, but I see
That, sirs, this year it may not be.

The grapes, the dancing and the sun
Must wait until a job is done;
No idleness, no time to stay,
No pause to think of yesterday.
How hard to be for ever strong!
But, sirs, I only ask "How long?"

How sprightly, see, the swallows fly
And whisper as they pass me by
That still the deep translucent lake
Mirrors the mountain-side. "Awake,"
They seem to cry, "from grey to blue,"

But, sirs, my duty is to you.

Yours is the will and I, your pawn,
At your decree must work from dawn
Until once more the night wears thin
And yet another day steals in.
I pledged my hand, my heart, my mouth

But, sirs, the wind is from the South.

really intended to come to the ground floor at all, but have decided that as they are there they may as well get out. Which, after a look at you, they do, leaving you alone, except for the poltergeist, who of course is invisible.

You now perceive an impressive array of buttons and, recollecting that your appointment is with a gentleman on the fifth floor, you press the button labelled 5. At once the lift gives a click, and begins to descend rapidly. It stops with a bump, presumably in the basement, and nothing more happens. You press the fifth-floor button again, and the lift shoots up at a dizzy speed, so that you quite lose count of the floors. At last it stops, and you are about to emerge, when the door is opened from outside by a large messenger carrying a hundredweight or so of files. He pushes you back into the lift, closes the door, and asks you where you want to go. You say, "Is this the fifth floor?" and he answers "No, the sixth"; and at that moment the lift starts going down all on its own. The messenger advises you to push up

a switch marked EMERGENCY STOP. You do this, and the lift halts abruptly between two floors. You then press the fifth-floor button once more and nothing happens. The messenger thinks a bit, and then points out that you haven't pushed the Emergency Stop switch down again. You hasten to rectify this omission, and the lift goes straight to the basement. This suits the messenger all right, and he departs with his files, leaving you again alone with the poltergeist. For the fourth time you press the button, and this time the lift goes up quietly and efficiently to the fifth floor. You know that you are there, because you can see through a little window in the door a notice on the wall saying so. But on trying to open the door you find that you can't, because the poltergeist has temporarily removed the handle. You bang on the door in the hope of attracting somebody's attention.

You decide to make for the sixth floor and walk down; so you press the sixth-floor button, and the lift goes up about six feet and stops firmly. You

go up and down the row of buttons, pressing every one in turn, including a red one marked ALARM. You push the Emergency Stop switch up and down. You bang and stamp and shout. A smell of cabbage rises from somewhere below and fills the lift.

Years later the lift gives itself a little shake and slides smoothly to the ground floor. As you stagger out into the light you are greeted by the poltergeist, who, after the fashion of the Homeric deities, has taken upon him the shape of a mortal man, even that of an engineer from the Ministry of Works and Buildings.

"Funny," he says, "I can never find anything wrong with this lift. But there, you know," he adds, with a sideways look at that middle-age spread which neither rationing nor the privations of your recent captivity have eliminated, "the fact is these lifts weren't built for this sort of traffic. Take you up, sir?"

But you know better now. The stairs will be steep, but *sic* (and only *sic*) *itur ad astra*.



"It was a nice idea of the Government's to allow us to post used envelopes. It's such a saving in stamps."

Little Talks

WHAT is a vested interest? And why is it so bad?
Bad?

I never read an article without learning that "vested interests" have either stood in the way, or are standing in the way, or will stand in the way, if we are not careful, of some much-needed reform.

They often do.

Well, what are they?

Well, I suppose the dictionary would say they were interests, or rights, of property, money and so on which were definitely—well, vested in a person.

In a person?

Of course.

Why "of course"? Take a coal-owner. He has a right to get coal from a seam or something—and nobody else has. Has he got a "vested interest" in that seam?

Not strictly, no. His right to hew the coal is an interest "vested" in him. I mean, that right is his for good.

I see. Then when is an interest not a vested interest?

It's difficult to say. Well, the coal-

miner, for example, working for a weekly wage, or whatever it is—he's got no permanent or fixed right of property—that's not a "vested interest."

Is it an "interest" at all?

Strictly, perhaps not.

Well, let's think of another. Suppose the miner has an accident and gets a lump sum by way of compensation, and he converts that into an annuity—is that a "vested interest"?

Certainly. It's an enduring "interest" vested in him—and nobody else.

I see. Now, I write a book. By the Copyright Act nobody but I can publish that book for fifty years after my death—or rather 25—unless I let him. And if I do let him he has to pay me—or my heir—a halfpenny, say, for every copy he sells. Have I got a "vested interest"?

Certainly.

Is an Old Age Pension a "vested interest"?

By the definition, yes. Of course, none of these is the sort of thing the politicians mean when they denounce "vested interests."

Not the coal-owner?

Oh, yes, the coal-owner, of course.

And the ship-owner?

Yes.

And the bicycle-owner?

No.

Why not? Isn't a man's right of property in his bicycle "vested" in him?

Ah, but he doesn't make money out of it.

Have you never hired a bicycle?

I suppose you're right.

Have I a "vested interest" in my wife?

Don't be silly.

Why not? I have a right to her society and comfort guaranteed by the law. And if anyone runs away with her I can sue him for damages. Menelaus surely had a "vested interest" in Helen of Troy.

I suppose you're right again. But what are you getting at?

I've just been reading a powerful article in a Sunday paper in which the writer says: "I think that, apart from these three great vested interests, there has been a great and good change in the outlook and desires of the mass of the people of this country."

What are the three?

"Bureaucracy—Big Business—and Trade Unionism." If I understand you correctly, he's talking nonsense.

If you're going to use words correctly, he is.

Strangely enough, that is my desire.

I see what he means, though. He means that here are three great forces who have an interest—in the other sense—in keeping things as they are.

I don't see how he can mean that. But, if he does, why doesn't he say so? He doesn't even say they have a "vested interest" in so-and-so. Bureaucracy itself is a "vested interest." But what on earth is Bureaucracy vested in?

Ask me another.

Right. Will there be "vested interests" in the Better World?

Oh, surely not.

But, surely, in the Better World, everyone will have a guaranteed wage or a pension—"Freedom from want—security"?

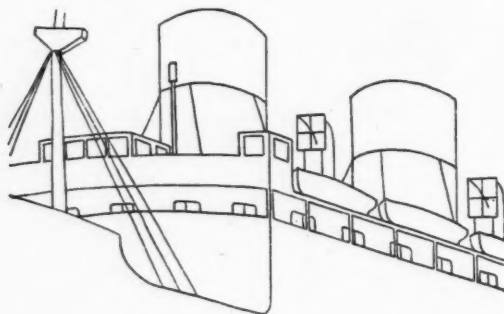
True.

And that will be a right vested in every man by virtue of his citizenship. That's the big ideal, isn't it?

Yes.

So that the Better World will be an absolute mass of Vested Interests?

Strictly, I suppose it will. But only little ones.



Jack Inglis

"Good heavens, Bill, it's a small world after all!"

Ah, now we're coming to it. What they mean by "vested interests" is something that's big and (according to them) bad?

Yes. Selfish, perhaps, is the best word.

I agree. And, that being so, why can't the pundits use it, instead of yelping technical terms which they don't understand and leading the ignorant into bogs of confusion and error?

I'll tell them.

Do. Did you read about President. Roosevelt? The President was "startled" to find how many Americans joining the forces were illiterate.

Now, don't start any cracks about that. I think it's the Talkies myself. In the days of the silent films one had to be able to read.

But he wasn't talking about reading and writing. It was "general education."

I still think it's the Talkies, and I dare say our War Office would tell you the same thing.

Maybe—but I doubt it.

One up for our "antediluvian" system of education, if you're right.

It isn't only that. Remember the poor old B.B.C.

Must I?

They're pouring out general information day and night. You can scarcely ever turn the wireless on without having instruction of some sort pumped into you—

If you don't switch off.

Quite. But if you kept it on all the time I believe in about a fortnight you'd be a master-gardener, bee-keeper and basket-maker, you'd have a patchy but extensive knowledge of India, Alaska, China, and Iceland, and be able to compose symphonies and write light verse.

You'd also have to listen to some of the most frightful ditties ever committed by mortal man.

Aren't they appalling—especially the sob-songs? The B.B.C. is an amazing case of Jekyll and Hyde—ladling out stimulating tonics with one hand and poisonous muck with the other.

Quite right. We want a little of everything.

I don't want any of the dance-band crooner. When they do have a recognizable good tune nowadays they make it beastly with nauseating words. By the way, are they really all Americans?

Who?

The singers—and the conductors? I like hearing Americans use their own slang and their own accent, and I don't mind our importing a little of the slang



"Surely you remember me, Sir—Tomlinson Minor."

if it's useful and amusing; but why every little British band-master should have to pretend he was born in Brooklyn I can't imagine.

"ITALY," said Metternich, "is a geographical expression."

That was before the day of Garibaldi, maker of modern Italy, lover of Freedom, friend of Britain. Now the wheel has come full circle, and the Italy of Mussolini, enemy of Freedom, foe of Britain, lies in the dust. But what of the day when the strutting braggart struck at beaten France? Do you remember General Wavell's men and their feats of arms? Admiral Cunningham's at Matapan? And the Fleet Air Arm at Taranto?

MUSSOLINI WON'T FORGET !

Many of the heroes of these battles did not return; many are in hospital; the rest are eagerly awaiting to engage and defeat a still more evil foe.

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN

to send a contribution to Mr. PUNCH'S COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4? Send now to show your appreciation and gratitude to our magnificent fighting men.

Does the Press do much "educating," d'you think?

It tries. It tries nobly. But unfortunately there are far more listeners than readers.

It certainly tests the brain. What with "Quizzes," and cross-word puzzles, and trying to find the beginning of the three articles you've read the end of on the back page, and what sort of week you're going to have by the stars, and the fifteen possible courses Hitler might take, and what to do with your asparagus coupons—

Not to mention the football pools. I always laugh when I'm told that Proportional Representation is far too complicated to work in this country. To a nation brought up on football-pool-forms it would be child's-play.

So you don't take such a poor view as the President?

No. I think we pick up things remarkably quickly. The weak point is that we are too fond of picking up words—"slogans," catchwords, snappy headlines and woolly phrases. And when we've got a new one we run about like a dog with a new bone in its mouth.

For example?

"Vested interests."

A. P. H.

"Many parachutists have been found throughout Denmark—but no parachutists. This is worrying the Germans, who have made repeated searches and enquiries, states Reuter."—*Newcastle Paper.*

Enough to worry anybody.

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Virginia Woolf

THE inner circle of VIRGINIA WOOLF's admirers value her most when she is floating about in the private world of her novels. It is possible, however, that her critical essays in *The Common Reader* and in this volume (*The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*, THE HOGARTH PRESS, 9/-) will prove more durable, for it was a great advantage to someone so given to introspection to be drawn out of herself by real people, in the scrutiny of whom she was able to give much freer play than in her novels to her subtle sense of character, her vein of delicate malice and her eye for significant details.

Her choice of subjects for her criticism reveals a marked bias in favour of writers in comfortable circumstances—Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ, GIBBON, HORACE WALPOLE, GEORGE MOORE and HENRY JAMES. Until quite recently a private income was reckoned by writers as an unqualified blessing. GIBBON ranked it high among the advantages which distinguished him from the mass of his fellow-creatures, and was entirely untroubled by the reflection, if it ever occurred to him, that he was being supported by the labours of certain among the fellow-creatures whom he could discern in the distance toiling at their necessary if somewhat distasteful tasks. TOLSTOI, RUSKIN and WILLIAM MORRIS (all of them, incidentally, wealthier men than GIBBON) have made this carefree attitude no longer possible. The writer to-day, even if he earns his living by his pen, is widely regarded as a parasite upon society, and if he has private means is likely to be forced, by the weight of public disapproval, either into Communist propaganda or, like VIRGINIA WOOLF, into overstating the benefit to a writer of financial security, and understating or ignoring its unfavourable effects. HORACE WALPOLE, VIRGINIA WOOLF writes with a touch of envy for someone born before a social conscience was invented, swallowed "without a pang" an income of £2,500 dropped yearly into his mouth from Collectorships and Usherships. Thus pleasantly circumstanced, he was able to cultivate a sensibility and intelligence which VIRGINIA WOOLF effectively shows to have been too fine for MACAULAY's blunt taste to value justly. But we need not have an excessive admiration of the sterner virtues to feel that the dilettante of Strawberry Hill, with his snuff-boxes and lap-dogs and shuddering distaste for Dr. JOHNSON, is rendered less ridiculous by MACAULAY's invective than by VIRGINIA WOOLF's rapturous "Certainly there is something wonderful to the present age in the sight of a whole human being." GIBBON, again, though doubtless he had to plod along some muddy lanes during his service with the Hampshire Militia, is not a man for whom it is prudent to claim whatever admiration is due to a bare and rigorous existence. "He had roughed it," writes VIRGINIA WOOLF, "not only in the Hampshire Militia, but among his equals," supping, she continues, at little tables covered with a napkin, in the middle of a coffee room, upon a bit of cold meat or a sandwich, before he retired to rule supreme over the first families of Lausanne. A hard life, though no harder than that of GEORGE MOORE who boasts in "Hail and Farewell" of having limited the cost of his dinner over a considerable period to half a crown, and who, according to VIRGINIA WOOLF, detested "meals, servants, ease, respectability." HENRY JAMES himself, beneath VIRGINIA WOOLF's transforming touch, becomes a blend of KOSCIUSZKO and EPICETUS, a man "tough and even stoical," who under the impact of

the Great War turned the home of his spirit, as he put it, "into a fortress of the faith, a palace of the soul, an extravagant, bristling, flag-flying structure."

Yet, in spite of all this special pleading, VIRGINIA WOOLF's curiosity about human nature, helped by a sharp eye for salient facts, gives us many glimpses of HENRY JAMES and the rest as they really were. She tells us that HENRY JAMES shrank from taking a certain road in Rye because it led past the workhouse, thus obtruding upon his notice the line of tramps waiting for admittance; she gives his characteristic tribute to London—"On the whole, the best point of view in the world"; and without comment, but no doubt with due appreciation, she quotes from one of his meditations upon himself a perfect example of how to distend (one cannot use so crude a word as split) an infinitive—"... and my poor old genius pats me so admirably and lovingly on the back that I turn, I screw round, and bend my lips to passionately, in my gratitude, kiss its hands."

In addition to these critical studies there are a few personal essays, one of which, "Evening in Sussex," expresses VIRGINIA WOOLF's temperament subtly and completely in less than three pages. She was a connoisseur of feeling rather than a lover of life, noting and appraising each sensation in turn, but unable ever to yield herself wholly to any one emotion. For this limitation, though it is not quite clear whether she felt it to be a general human limitation or peculiar to herself, she finds an apt image in "Evening in Sussex"—"There is always some sediment of irritation when the moment is as beautiful as it is now. . . . I cannot hold this—I cannot express this—I am overcome by it—I am mastered. . . . One could only offer a thimble to a torrent that could fill baths, lakes." H. K.

Voluntary Ambassador

At his own risk—and it was often risky enough—Mr. ARNOLD LUNN has travelled many thousands of miles in Italy, Switzerland, Ireland and America intent on ascertaining how far neutral peoples realized that our cause, if not pre-eminently Christian, was at least coincident with Christianity. A skier and mountaineer of international repute; a Catholic, which gave him access to some of the surliest of the neutrals; and a Liberal, which rendered him happily immune from their illiberalism, Mr. LUNN was obviously the man for the job. He went to learn and, if required, to teach; and wryly remarks that Father COUGHLIN, who "never tells a lie on purpose or the truth except by accident," talked to him for three hours without asking a single question about Europe. He himself lets his hosts—especially Ulster and Eire—strike their own attitudes, though an imaginary dialogue between an Irishman and an Englishman shows that this modest self-effacement has nothing diffident about it. *And the Floods Came* (EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, 15/-) is equally remarkable for its honest observation and its exhilarating outlook; even if one feels that the writer's view of international finance—which, his authorities say, must be innocent because it doesn't really find war profitable!—is the Achilles' heel of an otherwise invulnerable argument.

H. P. E.

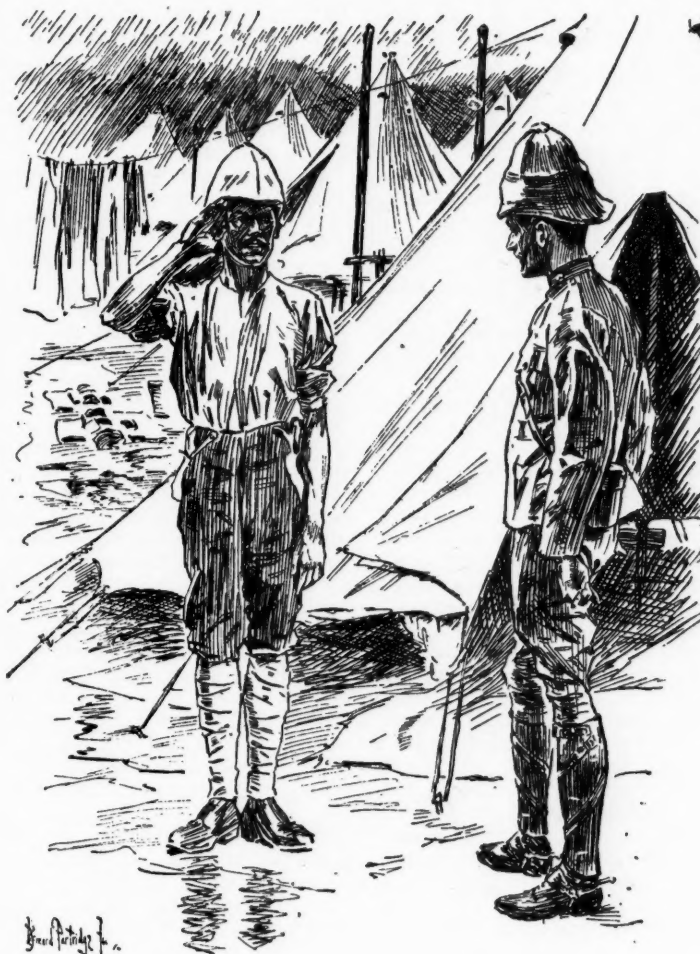
Orchestral Odyssey

If it was ever true that the British are an unmusical nation the reason, as Mr. THOMAS RUSSELL says in *Philharmonic* (HUTCHINSON, 7/6), is that the ordinary citizen has in the past had no opportunity of hearing

any music; even at the present time the vast majority of the inhabitants of this country have never heard a symphony orchestra except on the wireless, which is, at best, a poor substitute for the real thing. Mr. RUSSELL, who has been business manager of the London Philharmonic Orchestra since the outbreak of war, is convinced that, with large enough concert halls and cinema prices, symphony concerts would be both popular and profitable; though it is hard to see why symphony orchestras should be denied the State assistance given to libraries, museums and picture-galleries. A yearly sum equal to about ten minutes' war expenditure would suffice to free them from all financial worries; but "the only people in this country who are not musical are the politicians, both municipal and national." (One might quote the town councillor who could see no reason why the municipality should pay a symphony orchestra of sixty-five musicians instead of having one player of each instrument and making him play a bit louder.) Mr. RUSSELL also has much to say about audiences, the training and recruiting of players—orchestral playing should certainly not be regarded as a *pis aller* for disappointed soloists—and conductors, from TOSCANINI to those brandishers of the baton whose public career depends solely on financial backing and the law of libel. If orchestral music is to take its proper place in the future life of the community a great deal of hard thinking must be done, and it seems more than likely that many of the problems will be solved along the lines indicated in this stimulating book. D. C. B.

Prospero or Caliban?

A journalist's work is necessarily improvised; but though his material is often shoddy, his opinion of it need not be. *In the Meantime* (CONSTABLE, 12/6) shows what can be done by a man who honestly chews the somewhat unprepossessing cud of a reporter and book-reviewer; and Mr. HOWARD SPRING, using a slender thread of autobiography mainly for its meditative opportunities, has produced not only a very readable book but in patches—sober patches rather than purple—an unusually sagacious one. Starting fair and square with a man's and a nation's responsibility for good and evil choices—for "if 'God's in His Heaven,' the Devil is in his Hell"—Mr. SPRING finds the *Prospero* in us shockingly ready to knuckle under to the *Caliban*. The story of his own career on the *Bradford Observer*, *Manchester Guardian* and *Evening Standard*, the people and books he encountered on his way, his briefly



MARK TAPLEY ATKINS

Officer (going his rounds after a night of heavy rain). "WELL, DID YOU FIND THE GROUND VERY WET LAST NIGHT?"
Tommy. "OH NO, SIR. OUR BLANKETS SOAKED UP ALL THE RAIN!"

Bernard Partridge, June 13th, 1900

indicated memories of the last war in Normandy and Flanders, are all outdone in importance and eloquence by his poignant and well-deserved criticism of inter-war politics, education and art. "We are told," he admits, "that this is not the time for inquests. Perhaps not; but there is no reason why a beginning should not be made with collecting the evidence." H. P. E.

Letters to a Conscript Father

MY DEAR FATHER,—I didn't write at once to commiserate over your being on a charge for Improper Possession and Loss by Neglect, because (a) I was really a bit cheesed about it, after all the guidance I've tried to give you, and (b) we've had a pretty binding week here; even Bairstow hasn't had any leisure to speak of.

Now about this charge. Even without being told, Dad, I honestly think you should have known better than to volunteer for a Special Party, even if the Corporal did say it would mean a nice day out in the country. Special Parties are poison, and may mean anything from War Weapons Week Guards of Honour to walking for miles in circles at identification parades. And as for volunteering—well!! You can think yourself lucky it was only to fix barbed wire round a watercress farm.

But I quite see that falling into the water might have happened to anybody. (I suppose you *did* fall? Don't get unpopular, for heaven's sake!) But how in the world did you come to be wearing the Corporal's respirator? I can understand how it sank from sight never to return, but I just don't see how you came to be wearing it. You say you "picked it up by mistake." Dad, such mistakes cannot be excused, not even amongst comparative erks. Suppose you did the same thing with somebody's rifle, and it wanted cleaning; just think of the trouble you can put yourself to by such carelessness.

Oh, well, it's over now, and I expect you've learnt your lesson. But I think you might have made more of your defence about the Corporal's having picked up *your* respirator, not *you* his. We both think this a very good line to have thought up, and if you'd got away with it you would have been forgiven for the other mistakes.

Yes, it was against Regulations for the Corporal to have forty cigarettes and some chocolate in his respirator-case.

No, I won't mention it to Mother, of course. I don't suppose she'd really understand, anyway. When I wrote and said we'd been a five-mile route march with rifle and full kit three mornings running she wrote back enthusiastically about my getting plenty of fresh air.

I suppose you didn't bring any watercress back?

Now for my own gen, and I hope it will serve as a warning to you against rumour in the R.A.F.

I heard the griff first from Flight-Sergeant Ribthorpe's room-orderly, a little panicky airman named Fluter. The rumour was that the whole Station was going to move, any day, to some unknown destination.

Now this was a pretty serious thing to hear, as you may imagine. Personally I'm all against spreading tales of this kind, but Flight-Sergeant Ribthorpe is well in with the Orderly Room mob, and I thought it a sufficiently sound source to pass the gen to Bairstow.

Naturally, the first thing he said was, "What about the Sports?" The Sports were fixed for the next Saturday and the whole Station has been putting shots and throwing weights and careering round the rugger pitches for weeks. I told him that Flight-Sergeant Ribthorpe had said that the Sports were cancelled—on account of the move. That's what the Airman Fluter had overheard. The next thing Bairstow said was, "What about our ping-pong table, and your guitar and electric-iron, and the nest of tables?" He mentioned one or two other non-portable belongings that we've accumulated over a period of months, and it was obvious that we should have to sell quickly, before the gen got around and ruined the market.

So we got rid of the ping-pong table right away to a man newly posted from Lossiemouth, and I was just coming to terms over a pair of bronze book-ends when L.A.C. Fribbing came in and shouted, "Whoopee! No Sports!" And we saw the cat was out of the bag. Fribbing was pleased because he comes from Keswick, and somebody had dished him up some duff about our destination being somewhere in the Lake District. However, his face fell when A.C. Croaker brought the gen that we were taking over a big Boys' Home in Kent. He'd heard the C.O. and the Adjutant discussing it, he said.

In the N.A.A.F.I. some Ground Gunners said that a place called Oban had been favourably mentioned in their unit, and it was soon easy to see that the "move" griff was all over Camp.

Next day the whole place was nattering. It was to be "somewhere by the sea," some said; others were betting on Keswick, but they were only Fribbing's little circle doing a bit of mass wishful thinking on his behalf. Some said it was a Women's College near Chesterfield; others said Nissen huts in Sherwood Forest; others, tents

in Hyde Park. Some even entertained a tale about hundreds of house-boats on the Broads, but I don't think anybody really felt that was very likely.

Anyway, this went on day after day, until L.A.C. Fribbing came in on Thursday looking as white as a Form 20. The reason he'd been glad about the cancellation of the Sports, apparently, was that he'd been detailed to arrange all the events. Having been taken off his normal duties for this purpose, he'd been having a thorough scrounge all week, only to discover that night (Thursday) that there wasn't going to be any move at all. He'd been told this very definitely by his Subordinate Commander, who had been making a few inquiries about how the Sports arrangements were going.

Bairstow had the presence of mind to slip Fribbing half-a-crown to keep this latest gen under his hat, because it was obviously time for us to begin buying while the market was still good. The Camp was full of people trying to dispose of trousers-presses, bicycles, sheet-music and so on at knock-down prices, and Bairstow and I cornered everything we could see. Bairstow's best deal was a "Manual of Air Force Law," five partly-used writing compendiums, a kettle, a tennis-racket and a bottle of meat extract—eighteenpence the lot. This would have been cheap, even without the book of stamps in one of the compendiums.

So there we were, just waiting for the news to break that there was to be no move, whereupon the owners of all this property would be back like flies round a honey-pot, offering smashing sums to buy back their things.

Everything was fine; so naturally it was something of a blow to us when a notice went up on D.R.O.'s to-day instructing all personnel to be packed ready to move at 0900 hours next Monday. Gen of this sort cannot be obstructed, of course, and even Bairstow couldn't get rid of much of the stuff we'd bought, although he did sell the meat extract to a man fresh out of Sick Bay who was several days behind in his griff.

Must stop now, as I have to help Bairstow pack the Orderly Room rabbits.

Your loving Son, PETER.

P.S.—LATER. It's all right, after all. It's only another Accommodation switch. Bairstow has the gen from an airman detailed to repaint the Squadron Office doors. Whew!

Reconstruction

YOU have quite possibly heard it said that after this war life—which is already quite different—will be quite different. You may also have heard the same thing after the Great War, the South African war and, if your age admits of it, the Crimean War. It is quite on the cards—ration, identity or ordinary fortune-telling ones—that you haven't thought of all the ways in which life is going to be so different. Do you, for instance, still adhere to the old-fashioned formula of soldier, sailor, tinker, tailor?

You do.

I thought so.

All that has got to be revised.

Soldier and sailor naturally remain, and airman, film-star, fire-watcher and Home Guard suggest themselves immediately. For the remaining two, you can stick to the old idea whilst bringing your vocabulary into line with the national effort, with Agricultural Worker, Black Marketeer. (If it comes to Black Marketeer, our advice to you is to swallow a couple of stones without hesitating. Even an operation for acute

appendicitis will be far cheaper in the long run.)

The next thing ought to give you some straightforward English fun, taking you, as it does, right back into the pre-coupon era. Silk, satin, cotton, rags has hitherto seemed a good formula for the practical housewife, although actually the last two items have never been very popular. They will now, however, come into their own and you had better start with rags, which are at present unrationed—limiting yourself to those which are unsuitable for salvage. Cotton will need coupons, and as your own are almost certainly all used up it may be rather a job to persuade elderly relations—who can't possibly want any clothes—to part with theirs. Silk and satin are right out, what with purchase tax and luxury-goods tax and one thing and another. Chintz, from the soft-furnishing department, will do very nicely instead, but in order to wear it with a clear conscience you must first make it into a chair-cover or curtains—which is what you will buy it for—and then use up what is left over for a wedding-dress. The whole thing now runs like this: Rags (if unsuitable for salvage), Cotton (if

coupons available from old Cousin Joseph), Chintz (no coupons, but pretty expensive, as it should be bought in terms of a large Chesterfield or, at the very least, a pair of casement curtains).

What about uniform?

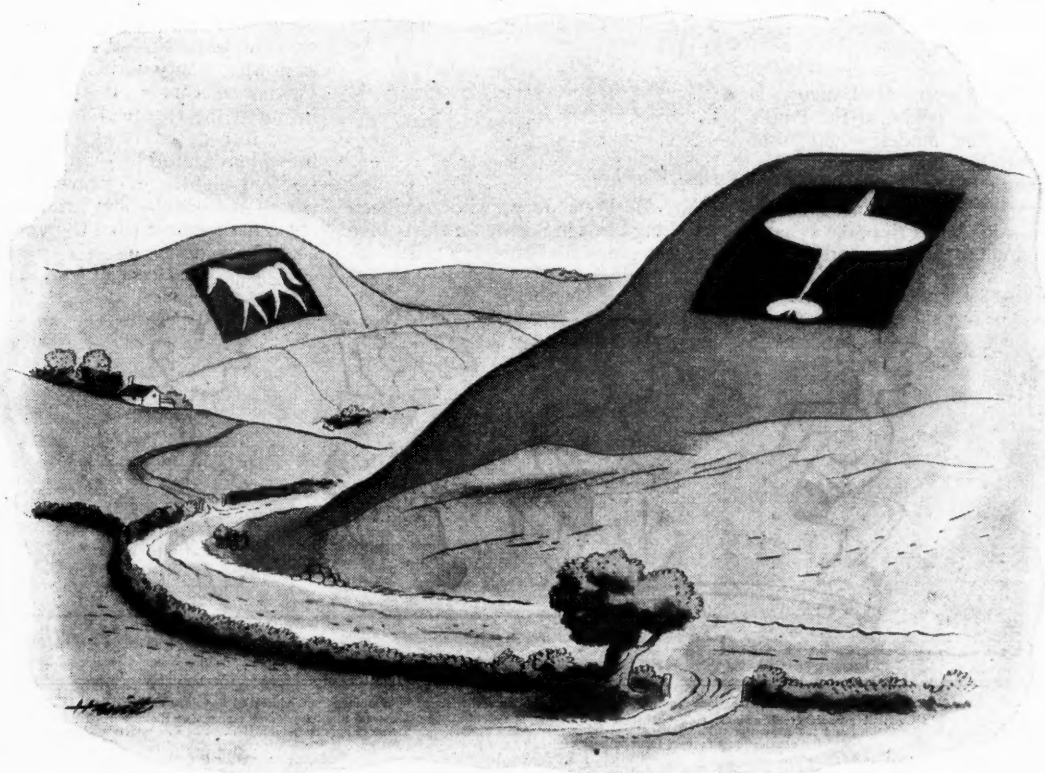
Easily the best of the lot.

Stick to it, girls.

The question of conveyance has long been *démodé* and still is. Coaches and carriages aren't made, wheel-barrow are needed on the land, and the English climate has never been suitable for gigs, even if there was still anybody left who owned one. Of course there was a time when the issue might have lain between limousines, touring-cars, runabouts and so on, but there is no need to labour this point now. We all know the position—if position it can still be called—about petrol. The formula is really rather dim, but it's the best we can do for you now.

Bicycles, tricycles—(very unlikely, but there are still one or two in remote country districts)—hiking, lorry-hopping. After all this, it is rather painful to have to realize that, as you will have taken all your stone-fruit to the Women's Institute to be made into jam, you won't have any stones to count with.

E. M. D.



No News is Good News.

Esperanto and the War

THE effect of the war on Esperanto becomes daily more serious, according to Mildred Bitts, well-known Esperanto expert. Almost nothing of importance is being written in Esperanto, at least in prose. "In verse," says Miss Bitts, "the Esperantist can hold his own." Perhaps the saddest feature of the slump, according to Miss Bitts, is that very few students are taking Esperanto seriously these days. As Sherman said, war is etaojn shrdlu. It is interesting to note that Sherman was very fond of Esperanto.

Waste Paper

Professor Inkhorn, of Malt Mixings, Sussex, has memorized the entire contents of his library, thus converting it into waste paper which he can now give away. "The first hundred volumes were the hardest," says the savant. "After that, nothing gave me much trouble." The professor writes all his letters on birch-bark and has made several canoes out of the contents of his waste-paper basket. "Canoeing is a fine sport," he says. "The word canoe comes from Hayti."

More Matches

J. Ermine Fripp, of Bangor, is pulling down his model of St. Paul's Cathedral. The model is made of 456,000 matches and will yield Mr. Fripp enough lights for several pipes of tobacco. "Now all I need is the tobacco," said Mr. Fripp. "I have tried smoking heather, tea, and spiraea,

but they are not habit-forming and I keep stopping. In other words, they use up too much energy. I want a habit that will look after itself and let me go my own way." Mr. Fripp's model is also yielding considerable quantities of glue. Glue is made from fish, and fish are scarce these days. "Cooking the glue with an onion will remove the fishy taste," says Mr. Fripp, "but why eat glue if you don't want a fishy taste? Fish are fish, I always say, and facts are facts." Mr. Fripp did not say whether onions are facts or not.

Morale in Germany: Is It Cracking?

In an interview at his hotel yesterday, Mr. Meredith Tutt said that German morale may or may not be crumbling. "This, mind you," he said, "is sheer guesswork." Mr. Tutt said that there are many reports of grumbling in Germany. "We are apt to take this as a good sign. But did the Germans never grumble before? The German capacity for grumbling must not be underestimated. Personally I should like to hear that all grumbling has suddenly ceased in Germany; this would convince me that something is cracking in Germany. However, I may be wrong. I don't know as much about this subject as everyone else does." On the subject of Italian morale Mr. Tutt was more definite. "It was never better," he declared. "This means it is still terrible."

Are the Japanese the Anglo-Saxons of the Far East?

No.

Bird-Watching

Mr. B. Pope Jory, who has been watching birds in Surrey for thirty-five years, reports that they are much the

same as ever. When asked if the Latin word *avis*, which means *bird*, is the same as the French word *avis*, which means *notice*, Mr. Jory said "*À mon avis*." Mr. Jory speaks beautiful French.

Judge's Amazing Theory

During the course of yesterday's proceedings in the libel action of *Mutchkin v. Bloat*, Mr. Justice Quelch interrupted the counsel for the plaintiff, who was endeavouring to set a certain construction upon the defendant's words, by saying: "I do not see why the words should necessarily mean anything at all. I am continually hearing counsel employ sentences which do not mean anything. I occasionally use such sentences myself. It must be established that the words meant *something* before we go on to see what the particular meaning was. The defendant may have uttered these words simply as words to fill up his newspaper column, without intending to impart information of any kind."

The Man Who Won the War

Mr. Herbert Parcel, the man who won the last Great War, has expressed the hope that the man who wins the present war will not be allowed to sink into oblivion as Mr. Parcel himself has been allowed to sink. "Only a brief generation ago," said Mr. Parcel, "I won the war. Now there is scarcely a soul who mentions it. Why?" Mr. Parcel, of course, is the man who invented the chemical substance *fule-mol*; introduced in minute amounts into plum and apple jam, it rendered the jam slightly less distasteful to the troops and enabled our armies to hold out a little longer than they otherwise could have done.



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